

## Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks

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### What They Do

*Shipping Clerks* are responsible for all outgoing shipments. They make sure that the right merchandise is being sent and is in perfect condition. Shipping Clerks prepare shipping documents and mailing labels. They record items taken from inventory and note when orders were filled. Shipping Clerks also look up and compute freight or postal rates, and record the weight and cost of each shipment. They may prepare invoices and furnish information about shipments to other parts of the company, such as the accounting department. When a shipment is checked and ready to go, Shipping Clerks may move the goods to the shipping dock and supervise the loading of the merchandise.

*Receiving Clerks* are responsible for verifying incoming shipments against the original order and accompanying invoice to determine whether the orders have been filled correctly. They unwrap incoming goods using tools such as pry bars and wire cutters. In many companies, Receiving Clerks use hand-held scanners to record barcodes on incoming products or enter the information into a computer. Shipments are checked for any discrepancies in quantity, price, and discounts. Receiving Clerks notify departments responsible for filing adjustment claims if merchandise is lost or damaged. They may also route or move shipments to the proper department, warehouse section, or stockroom.

*Traffic Clerks* maintain records on the destination, weight, and charges of incoming and outgoing freight. They verify rate charges by comparing the classification of materials with rate charts. Information is either scanned or entered by hand into a computer for use by the accounting department or other departments within the company. Traffic Clerks also keep a file of claims for overcharges and for damage to goods in transit.

### Tasks

- ▶ Examine contents and compare with records, such as manifests, invoices, or orders, to verify accuracy of incoming or outgoing shipment.
- ▶ Determine shipping method for materials, using knowledge of shipping procedures, routes, and rates.
- ▶ Prepare documents, such as work orders, bills of lading, and shipping orders to route materials.

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- ▶ Confer and correspond with establishment representatives to rectify problems, such as damages, shortages, and nonconformance to specifications.
- ▶ Requisition and store shipping materials and supplies to maintain inventory of stock.
- ▶ Deliver or route materials to departments, using work devices, such as handtruck, conveyor, or sorting bins.
- ▶ Pack, seal, label, and affix postage to prepare materials for shipping, using work devices, such as hand tools, power tools, and postage meter.

Detailed descriptions of these occupations may be found in the Occupational Information Network (O\*NET) at [online.onetcenter.org](http://online.onetcenter.org).

### Important Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities

- ▶ Mathematics — Using mathematics to solve problems.
- ▶ Writing — Communicating effectively in writing as appropriate for the needs of the audience.
- ▶ Active Listening — Giving full attention to what other people are saying, taking time to understand the points being made, asking questions as appropriate, and not interrupting at inappropriate times.
- ▶ Judgment and Decision Making — Considering the relative costs and benefits of potential actions to choose the most appropriate one.
- ▶ Coordination — Adjusting actions in relation to others' actions.
- ▶ Transportation — Knowledge of principles and methods for moving people or goods by air, rail, sea, or road, including the relative costs and benefits.
- ▶ Clerical — Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology.
- ▶ Production and Processing — Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
- ▶ Written Comprehension — The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- ▶ Oral Expression — The ability to communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand.

### Work Environment

Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks work both indoors and outdoors. Working conditions depend on the type of employer. Clerks employed in large department stores usually work in comfortable areas that are air-conditioned, well-heated, and lighted. Those who work in large warehouses may experience uncomfortable temperatures depending on the weather. Workers' hands and clothing often get dirty from containers and glue. Clerks who ship and receive heavy merchandise may be injured and must be careful when moving and handling orders. Shipping and Receiving Clerks sometimes work under pressure to move merchandise in or out according to tight time schedules which may cause stress. This happens during certain times of the year when firms get rush orders.

Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks usually work 40 hours per week. However, when products, merchandise, or materials are needed in a hurry, Clerks may need to work overtime on weekends, holidays, and evenings.

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### California's Job Outlook and Wages

The California Outlook and Wage table below represents the occupation across all industries.

Standard Occupational Classification	Estimated Number of Workers 2004	Estimated Number of Workers 2014	Average Annual Openings	2006 Wage Range (per hour)
<b>Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks</b>				
43-5071	107,500	117,900	3,250	\$9.80 to \$16.15

*Wages do not include self-employment.*

*Average annual openings include new jobs plus net replacements.*

*Source: [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov), Employment Projections by Occupation and OES Employment & Wages by Occupation, Labor Market Information Division, Employment Development Department.*

### Trends

Employment of Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks is expected to grow slower than average for all occupations through 2014. Job growth continues to be somewhat limited by automation, as large warehouses increasingly use equipment such as handheld scanners, computerized conveyor systems, robots, computer-directed trucks, and automatic data storage and retrieval systems. However, job opportunities are still expected to be high due to the estimated 22,100 who will retire or leave for other kinds of work between 2004 and 2014, requiring replacement workers.

### Training/Requirements/Apprenticeships

Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks usually follow one of the following training paths:

- ▶ High school diploma or equivalent
- ▶ Community college programs
- ▶ Adult education
- ▶ Regional occupational programs
- ▶ On-the-job training
- ▶ Vocational schools

Some employers may require a valid California driver's license.

### Recommended High School Course Work

High school preparation courses in language arts, general business, business mathematics, and computer technology are helpful.

### Where Do I Find the Job?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods.

Use the *Search for Employers by Industry* feature on the *Career Center* page at [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov) to locate employers in your area. Search under the following industry names to get a list of private firms and their addresses:

- ▶ All Other General Merchandise Stores
- ▶ Computer and Supply Merchant Wholesalers
- ▶ Department Stores
- ▶ Medical Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
- ▶ Office Equipment Merchant Wholesalers
- ▶ Other Building Material Dealers

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- ▶ Discount Department Stores
- ▶ Hardware Stores
- ▶ Home Centers
- ▶ Paint and Wallpaper Stores
- ▶ Temporary Help Services

Search these **yellow page** headings for listings of private firms:

- ▶ Air Cargo and Package Express Service
- ▶ Delivery Service
- ▶ Freight Forwarding
- ▶ Mail Receiving and Forwarding Service
- ▶ Packing and Crating Service

### Where Can the Job Lead?

Advancement opportunities are better in large companies and for those who continue to learn new skills. Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks may advance to shipping and receiving supervisor, warehouse manager, traffic rate clerk, or to traffic manager.

### Other Sources of Information

International Warehouse Logistics Association  
[www.iwla.org](http://www.iwla.org)

Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals  
[www.cscmp.org](http://www.cscmp.org)